

Message Text

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22

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-02 FAA-00 L-03 /035 W

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R 141300Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2409

INFO: RUESKN/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 016

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

UNCLAS MARTINIQUE 0392

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, BF, FM, FW

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: AMERICAN AIRLINES APPLICATION FOR CARIBBEAN ROUTES.

REF: MARTINIQUE 041, STATE 224524

1. WE CONTINUE TO PLACE IMPORTANCE ON ADEQUATE SERVICES BY U.S. AIR CARRIERS TO THE FRENCH ANTILLES FOR THE REASONS SET FORTH IN OUR REFTEL ABOVE. IF ANYTHING, THE MATTER IS NOW MORE PRESSING, PARTICULARLY FOR GUADELOUPE WHICH PUT SEVERAL HUNDRED NEW HOTEL ROOMS INTO OPERATION IN THE PAST YEAR, ONLY TO FIND A DISASTROUS SUMMER SEASON ON ITS HANDS BECAUSE OF THE VOLCANIC DISTURBANCES IN BASSE-TERRE. AT PRESENT GUADELOUPE S HOTEL INDUSTRY IS IN A RUINOUS SITUATION, WITH OCCUPANCY RUNNING PERHAPS 10 PERCENT, AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE WINTER SEASON IS POOR, GIVEN THE LIKELIHOOD THE VOLCANO PROBLEM WILL LIKELY CONTINUE FOR SOME MONTHS.

2. DURING A RECENT TRIP TO GUADELOUPE, SEVERAL BUSINESS LEADERS EXPRESSED THE HOPE TO ME THAT AMERICAN AIRLINES WOULD EVENTUALLY BE ALLOWED TO TAKE OVER THE SUSPENDED PAN AM SERVICES. WE HAVE HEARD THE SAME VIEWS FROM MARTINIQUEAN BUSINESSMEN WHO, SIMILARLY TO THEIR GUADELOUPEAN COUNTERPARTS, BELIEVE A GROWING TOURIST TRADE IS A MUST FOR HEALTHY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN GUADELOUPE ATTACHES SO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO AMERICAN AIRLINES. PROSPECTS OF REPLACING PAN AM THAT IT IS

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CONSIDERING DESPATCHING A TOURIST OFFICE DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO INFORMALLY ACQUAINT U.S. OFFICIALS (PRESUMABLY STATE AND CAB)

WITH THE PROBLEM AS THEY SEE IT.

4. ON THIS LAST POINT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S
ADVICE WHETHER A VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY SUCH A CCI OR TOURIST
OFFICE GROUP WOULD BE USEFUL. WE NOTED THAT SOME OF OUR CONTACTS,
BOTH IN MARTINIQUE AND GUADELOUPE, FEARED THAT SUCH A VISIT
MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED AS INTERFERENCE IN A INTERNAL U.S. PROBLEM
AND THUS CONTERPRODUCTIVE. PLEASE ADVISE.
SHACKLETON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AVIATION AGREEMENTS, AIR SCHEDULES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MARTIN00392
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760347-0401
From: MARTINIQUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760963/aaaacbrd.tel
Line Count: 70
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MARTINIQUE 41, 76 STATE 224524
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vandyklc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 FEB 2004 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <26 AUG 2004 by vandyklc>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: AMERICAN AIRLINES APPLICATION FOR CARIBBEAN ROUTES.
TAGS: EAIR, BF, FW, US, AMERICAN AIRLINES
To: STATE KINGSTON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006